



*Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
July 22-26, 2013*

First Nations man faces \$16K bill for 'Idle No More' blockade on CN Railway

[CTV News](#)

July 25, 2013



Native protesters march up Wellington Street in Ottawa on Friday, Jan. 11, 2013. (Sean Kilpatrick / THE CANADIAN PRESS)

SARNIA, Ont. -- A First Nations protester is facing a bill of more than \$16,000 after being ordered to pay damages to CN Rail over a rail blockade in southwestern Ontario last winter as part of "Idle No More" protests.

An Ontario Superior Court judge ordered 51-year-old Ron Plain of the Aamjiwnaang First Nation to pay the damages in a decision released Tuesday.

Plain was accused of ignoring a court injunction to stop his involvement in a 13-day blockade of the railway near Sarnia, Ont., in support of a hunger protest by Chief Theresa Spence of Attawapiskat First Nation.

CN Rail had asked for damages of \$50,000 as financial compensation for the blockade, which the company said it would commit to its aboriginal scholarship program.

Plain's lawyer asked that damages be limited \$1,000, saying that Plain had persuaded the protesters to end the blockade on Jan. 2.

A campaign to raise money for Plain's legal fees on the website Indiegogo brought in under \$5,000, about half of his fundraising goal.

Aboriginal leaders worry about oil industry pollution on traditional lands

[Edmonton Journal](#)

July 20, 2013

Jodie Sinnema



Oilsands operations in northern Alberta. Photograph by: Bruce Edwards, file , Edmonton Journal

EDMONTON - The chief and council of Cold Lake First Nations want a tour of traditional lands contaminated by four recent surface releases of bitumen emulsion from oil wells, says the First Nations industry liaison.

"We have many concerns because that's our traditional territory," said Christine Chalifoux, who works as liaison between Cold Lakes First Nations and Canadian Natural Resources Ltd. "As always, our concern is how much damage is done to the land and the wildlife that is out there."

After a spill reported June 24 affecting 40 hectares of land at Canadian Natural's Primrose South location, as well as three other spills at its Primrose East location this spring, the Alberta Energy Regulator ordered the Calgary-based producer to stop a process using steam to melt bitumen, allowing it to pool into wells before turning off the steam and pumping out the bitumen.

Both projects are on the Cold Lake Air Weapons Range about 240 kilometres east of Edmonton. That range, Chalifoux said, has been federally recognized as part of the First Nation's traditional territory.

As such, Chalifoux wants to have more details of how the land has been affected by the steam and the bitumen leaking to the surface. Alberta Environment says the Primrose South spill killed several animals, including waterfowl, shrews, beaver, frogs and tadpoles.

"Cold Lake is a big lake and Primrose Lake is out there and it's concerning for people who go out fishing," Chalifoux said. She said the affected area of the spills is about one hour from Cold Lake First Nations and about 30 minutes from the English Bay Reserve.

The Alberta Energy Regulator said there have been no risks to public safety, but have banned high-pressure steaming until a thorough investigation determines why the leaks occurred.

"I couldn't say there's no risk," Chalifoux said. "There's people that work out there, whether it's our people or Canadian Natural people. Is that bitumen going in to the water?"

She said she hopes to arrange a tour of the affected area by the end of July. It could be delayed because the First Nations' office closes next week for the annual pilgrimage at Lac Ste. Anne.

"We want to get that tour right away because it's an ongoing issue," Chalifoux said. "I don't know if they have it under control. I don't know if the leak has stopped. All I know is that the leak has come up to the surface."

The release dirtied a body of water that Canadian Natural Resources initially described as “approximately 10 acres” (four hectares) of slough. The energy regulator equated that to approximately 175 barrels of spilled bitumen and about 800 barrels of oily vegetation.

Now that the spill covers about 40 hectares of land, there has been no revision to the spill volume.

“If we’re not getting what actually is going on out there, it kind of makes you wonder how much land is being affected in other areas that they’re unaware of,” Chalifoux said, noting Canadian Natural Resources also wants a meeting with the chief and council. “But myself, as well as the Nation, we’re very concerned because oil gets into the land and starts wrecking all the plants and all the land surrounding it.”

Canadian Natural Resources is still investigating, but believes the likely cause to be mechanical in nature.

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First Nations games ends with a bang

[Prince Albert Daily Herald](#)

July 19, 2013

Jodi Schellenberg



A group of dignities march in to drumming at the First Nations Summer Games closing ceremonies on Friday.

It was the end to a week filled with athletic greatness.

The First Nations Summer Games held its closing ceremonies on Friday at the Art Hauser Centre on Friday afternoon.

The closing ceremonies started with a group of elders marching in with flags and staffs to the beat of a drum.

Before the Muskoday First Nations could say good bye to the athletes, awards were presented to the top teams.

"I think over the last four to five days we have seen some fantastic display of athletic ability from athletes from all over the province," organizing committee member Dean Bear said.

The talent and sportsmanship of the athletes in the games impressed everyone watching.

"It has been an exciting week filled with spirit, sportsmanship and tradition," said Keith Fonstad of MNP, the title sponsor of the closing ceremonies. "To the athletes - you are role models. You make us proud and set the bar for future generations of athletes."

Although hosting the games was a huge accomplishment, it was a busy week for the members of Muskoday First Nations.

"It has been a very hectic few weeks for us," said Elder Howard Felix, one of the MCs. "The athletes we dealt with have been exceptional. It was an experience not many of us have experienced before."

It was a bittersweet farewell to the athletes from the Muskoday First Nations. They enjoyed hosting the games, but are glad they now get to relax.

"Now that it is over it is almost like a weight lifted off our shoulders because there is a lot of things that come into play behind the scenes during a week like this," Bear said. "Our organizing committee handled them in a professional way and today was the culmination of it."

Everyone thanked the volunteers and sponsors, saying without their support the games would not have been possible.

"I heard from a number of people what a great summer games we were able to put on," Bear said. "That can only happen with good volunteers, good organizers and good partners. Without the facilities we were able to use, we wouldn't have been able to host it. Our community is very small and we don't have that infrastructure in place so being able to count on the City of Prince Albert for that was paramount."

Bear said even though the games was a success, they did run into some hiccups at the beginning.

"We knew we needed a lot of volunteers for this to be a successful games," Bear said.

At first, they did not have a huge response although they did put on some volunteer drives at the Gateway Mall.

"First Nations people are funny, they like to wait until the last minute to get things done, then come out and get things prepared," Bear said. "We put out a request for volunteers leading up to the last couple of days and people did answer the call."

Not only did they get support from other First Nations communities, but from non-First Nations people as well.

"We the First Nations of this land, we chose by the virtue of who we are, to live in harmony and co-operation with those who are not exactly like us," Chief Austin Bear said. "We have so many of our white brothers and sisters who showed the same kindness and consideration for all of us -- thank you. Sometimes they are rude, but not intentionally so."

Without the volunteers, the games would not have been the success they were, Dean Bear said.

"Volunteers are important to the summer games," Marvin Sanderson said. "We have a lot of blue shirts out there. All these blue shirts didn't see a dime. It was a pat on the back and a thank you -- we are proud to say we have a lot of volunteers."

The other challenge Bear said they were worried about was the weather, after seeing a severe weather system go through the community on Monday evening.

"Luckily, that was it," Bear said. "We didn't have to have games delayed or moved. We were able to compact it and keep it on schedule. We didn't have very much for problems and had first class facilities."

The most important part of the ceremonies was to honour the accomplishments of the youth in the games.

"The most important part of our lives is our children -- let's keep it that way," Henry Felix said during the closing ceremonies.

They hoped everyone enjoyed their experience at the First Nations Summer Games.

"We are glad we were able to share our communities with the rest of the First Nations in Saskatchewan," Bear said. "We saw a good response at the closing ceremonies to all the awards. That's a thing I am going to remember for a long time."

Winners of the First Nations Summer Games:

Archery -- Prince Albert Grand Council

Athletics -- Touchwood Agency Tribal Council

Canoeing -- Team Woodland

Golf -- Prince Albert Grand Council and Yorkton Tribal Council

Soccer -- Battleford Agency Tribal Council

Softball -- Prince Albert Grad Council

First overall -- Touchwood Agency Tribal Council with 865.1 points

Second overall -- Meadow Lake Tribal Council with 842.7 points

Third overall -- Agency Chiefs Tribal Council with 790.9 points

Education bill viewed as assimilation plan

[Kamloops Daily News](#)

July 22, 2013

Mike Youds



Ron Ignace. Daily News Staff Reporter

History repeats itself in a federal blueprint for First Nations education, draft legislation that native leaders say fails to heed past wrongs.

The First Nations Education Act was already fuelling criticism from B.C. aboriginal leaders when the AFN moved to oppose it at its Whitehorse general assembly.

Autonomy in educating their children is a key concern, said Skeetchestn Chief Ron Ignace.

Ignace sees the legislation as a repeat of the 1969 white paper that proposed abolishment of the Indian Act and elimination of the established legal relationship between aboriginal people and Canada.

"There was a lot of discussion around strategies at the Assembly of First Nations, about all the assimilationist strategies being imposed on us more intensely," he said after returning from the Whitehorse gathering.

"All the chiefs are very concerned about what's coming down, and very disconcerted. I wouldn't rule out a long, hot summer," said Ignace.

While the theme of the assembly was empowerment, chiefs see little in the legislation that would facilitate that goal. The bill fails to consider important work already underway in B.C., they say.

In 1969, then-prime minister Pierre Trudeau and his native affairs minister, Jean Chretien, touted the white paper as a recipe for equality, but aboriginal leaders read only assimilation. They met in Kamloops that year, formed the Union of B.C. Indian Chiefs and produced their own "Brown Paper" in 1970.

More than 40 years later, leaders are lamenting that federal policymakers haven't learned key lessons as they prepare to present the First Nations Education Act to Parliament this fall.

Education has been pivotal in the long and hard-fought struggle for indigenous rights.

"The pattern in which the federal government has approached this (legislation) hasn't broken the pattern we are looking to break," Assembly of First Nations Chief Shawn Atleo told The Canadian Press.

Participants at the Whitehorse meeting issued a statement asking Canada to work with First Nations as partners on a path to progress.

Since 2012, the federal government has been crafting legislation that it says does exactly that. It says it has consulted with aboriginal communities at every step in the process, met with 600 people and received written input from almost 600 more.

The legislation would create a framework allowing First Nations to establish their own education systems.

The government sent a letter to First Nations chiefs earlier this month outlining a "blueprint" of its planned legislation, which is available online, and has requested feedback on progress made to date.

That draft version of the bill proposes standards for "school-success plans" for each First Nation school; suggests following up with annual reports; and promises governance "options" for communities in accordance with treaty rights.

But the AFN unanimously passed a motion opposing the government blueprint, citing seven key problems with it.

That motion pointed to Prime Minister Stephen Harper's 2008 residential schools apology and cited his statement that "this policy of assimilation is wrong, has caused great harm, and has no place in our country."

The motion said the impending legislation "denies" the primary importance of First Nations languages and cultures.

It also cited a failure to affirm First Nation control over First Nation Education, apply successful lessons learned by First Nations and address historic funding shortfalls.

Ignace sees the education blueprint as parallel with the government's weakening of environmental protections.

"With all the legislation coming at us, the sense we have is that we're moving to the assimilation of First Nations people, much like the white paper envisioned. It's like playing Donkey Kong - you hit one down and another one comes up in its place."

Key moments in the struggle over First Nations schooling policy

Education policy has long been a source of tension between the federal government and First Nations, from the painful legacy of residential schools to the current debate over the upcoming First Nation Education Act. Here are some key moments:

1874

The Canadian government's involvement in residential schools begins. Aboriginal children are removed from their communities across the country and placed in government-funded, church-run institutions. These schools are used to assimilate aboriginal children, by exposing them to new language and cultural traditions while stripping them of their own.

1972

The National Indian Brotherhood (which later becomes the Assembly of First Nations) asks for more control of its peoples' education. A policy is outlined in a paper called Indian Control of Indian Education.

1996

The last residential school closes in Yellowknife. The negative repercussions of life at these schools trickles down through generations of aboriginal peoples.

2004

Canada's auditor general finds that if current trends continue, it will take nearly 30 years for aboriginal people on reserves to obtain educational equality with the rest of the Canadian population.

2008

June 11: Prime Minister Stephen Harper offers an official apology, on behalf of Canada, to survivors of the residential school system.

Along with the apology, the federal government establishes the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The TRC is given a \$60-million budget, and a five-year mandate to investigate and document this under-represented period in Canada's historical archives.

2010

June 9: AFN makes a call to action on First Nations education, inviting the entire country to participate in improving education on reserves.

July 22: AFN releases "First Nations Control of First Nations Education 2010." AFN Chief Shawn Atleo asks that First Nations people be allowed to lead the way in improving their education.

2012

Jan. 24: A Crown-First Nations gathering is held. A commitment is made to "take action on education."

Dec. 11: Plans are announced for a First Nation Education Act. A discussion guide is published and released by the government, launching the first phase of the consultation process.

2013

May: After six months, phase one of the consultation process ends.

June 11: On the five-year anniversary of Harper's residential-schools apology, AFN Chief Atleo expresses discontent with relations with the government. He has sent a letter to Harper citing areas that must be addressed if reconciliation is to be achieved.

July 12: A letter is sent from the government to chiefs, updating them on the consultation process and outlining the next steps in preparing the First Nation Education Act.

The government releases a "blueprint" of the proposed legislation, which opens the second consultation phase. The legislation is slated to be presented before Parliament this fall.

The early outline of the bill proposes standards for "school-success plans" for each First Nation school; suggests following up with annual reports; and promises governance "options" for communities in accordance with treaty rights.

2014

September: The Canadian government hopes to implement the First Nations Education Act.

Ottawa asks courts for help with aboriginal abuse documents

[Globe And Mail](#)

July 22, 2013

Colin Perkel



Bernard Valcourt is Canada's Minister of Aboriginal Affairs. (CHRIS WATTIE/REUTERS)

The federal government has asked the courts for help on what to do with documents related to allegations of horrific abuse of students at a former aboriginal residential school, including some who say they were jolted in an electric chair.

Advocates for the survivors had accused the government of thwarting their compensation claims by hiding the documents – many of them from a criminal investigation of St. Anne's in Northern Ontario.

Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt has now written New Democrat Charlie Angus to say the appropriate forum to resolve the issue is through the courts.

"To bring clarity to these issues, I have instructed departmental officials to work with the Department of Justice to make a request for direction to the Ontario Superior Court," Mr. Valcourt states.

From 1904 to 1976, hundreds of aboriginal children from remote James Bay communities were sent to St. Anne's in Fort Albany, Ont., one of 140 church-run residential schools in Canada set up to "civilize" First Nations.

In the 1990s, Ontario Provincial Police conducted a five-year investigation of abuse at the school. The investigation and resulting criminal proceedings yielded the documents at issue.

In his letter, Mr. Valcourt says the government cannot simply hand them over because they belong to Ontario. In addition, he says, the files contain confidential statements from those questioned by police and are subject to privacy legislation.

Advocates for the victims argue the material could corroborate their abuse claims under the independent assessment process set up to settle a class-action suit against the feds over the residential schools. Ontario Superior Court is overseeing implementation of the settlement of the class action.

Mr. Angus, who had recently complained about the issue to Mr. Valcourt, called the decision a "breakthrough."

"Clearly federal lawyers are concerned that their failure to disclose the existence of nearly 1,000 police statements on abuse has compromised the adjudication process," Mr. Angus said Monday. "The federal government had an obligation to tell the claimants that they knew about the evidence of abuse at St. Anne's."

Mr. Angus said the failure of the government to tell victims about the police investigation and the evidence gathered had undermined the credibility of the hearings. The government must now ensure the survivors have the resources to challenge the government when the matter goes to court, he said.

Students at St. Anne's complained they had been whipped, kicked and beaten. Boys and girls said they were raped or otherwise sexually abused. Children said they were made to eat their own vomit.

The police investigation resulted in criminal charges against seven men and women. Five were convicted for offences such as assault causing bodily harm, indecent assault and administering a noxious substance.

The investigation also turned up evidence of an electric chair made by a supervisor. Victims said they were made to sit on the metal-framed chair with its plywood seat and wires leading to a black box. A supervisor would crank a handle, jolting the bodies.

"The small boys used to have their legs flying in front of them," Edmund Metatawabin, 65, who said he was twice put in the chair as a seven-year-old in the mid-1950s, told The Canadian Press. "The sight of a child being electrocuted and their legs waving in front of them was a funny sight for the missionaries and they'd all be laughing."

Fleury takes second shot at construction industry with UIC First Nations: Ex-NHL star joins UIC First Nations management team

[Calgary Herald](#)

July 23, 2013
Reid Southwick

Retired NHL star Theoren Fleury is lacing up dress shoes for a new venture in an ever-evolving career, this time building up business for a Calgary construction firm that works with First Nations on reserve projects.

The former Calgary Flames forward and Stanley Cup champion - who became an author and motivational speaker - is now business development manager for UIC First Nations.

Fleury, whose family shuttered a concrete business five years ago, said he is taking another shot at the construction industry, having learned some of the pitfalls of running a small company.

"I figured out that I was way too honest to be in that business," he said in an interview, referring to Fleury's Concrete Coatings.

The company sold decorative concrete to residential and commercial clients until the 2008 market crash, when the business took a major hit. But there were other problems, Fleury said. "We were taken advantage of at every opportunity, at every corner, (by) every dog-and-pony show that came through the door trying to sell us stuff," Fleury said."

UIC First Nations, whose general manager is Fleury's friend and construction industry veteran Patrick McCallion, aims to forge partnerships with aboriginal communities across the country to build schools, water treatment plants and other community projects on reserves.

Fleury said he visited nearly 70 reserves on speaking tours after publishing his eye-opening 2009 memoir, *Playing With Fire*, that detailed his drug and alcohol addictions and the sexual abuse he suffered in the 1980s while playing junior hockey.

Fleury said he saw scores of unfinished housing, elders lodges and schools in the communities he visited, the result of what he said were bad construction deals. "We've seen a lot of projects that have been incomplete because the construction company that came and promised, promised, promised, later says we ran out of money," Fleury said.

He later talked to McCallion about finding a company that was already established and could help aboriginal people learn skills and find jobs to become self-sufficient.

After some negotiations, Alaskabased UIC Construction Services agreed to open a Calgary subsidiary. At UIC First Nations, Fleury will seek out deals with aboriginal

communities, adopting a financial model he said would avoid the pain of expensive, incomplete projects.

The books on every project will be open and subject to the scrutiny of the First Nations partner, Fleury said. All funds for the work will be placed in an escrow account requiring aboriginal signatures before they are released for project payments, he said.

The fledgling startup has not yet signed any deals, but it's pursuing seven projects in Alberta, said Margaret Nelson, business development manager with UIC Construction Services, the holding company. The company aims to hire at least 70 per cent of its crews for any given project from the aboriginal community involved, Nelson said. Those living on reserves can receive on-the-job training throughout construction projects and get extra help to learn how to maintain the buildings after the work wraps up, she said.

"As we are growing and becoming a larger community, we wanted to reach out across native nation boundaries to help share that," Nelson said.

An aboriginal template for a sustainable economy: The sustainable practices of Indigenous Canadians provides a metaphor for re-imagining the Canadian economy

[Troy Media](#)

July 23, 2013

Lee White

VICTORIA, BC, Jul 23, 2013/ Troy Media/ – "Salmon was our gold," Sekw'el'was Chief Michelle Edwards recently reflected at the St'át'imc Emerging Economies Development Summit in Lillooet. Chief Edwards' point was that the fish from the Fraser River was the most valued item for trade over the grease trails that linked the different indigenous nations prior to European contact.

Ironically, this area was the epicentre of the Fraser River Gold Rush of 1858-1859, where the gold standard served as the foundation of currency for the modern economy.

These grease trails received their name from one highly valued commodity – eulachon grease. The eulachon is a small Pacific smelt with incredibly high oil content. A dried eulachon can be lit like a candle due to the rich oil holding profound nutritional value. Eulachon grease is processed by sitting the fish in a pit for about a week, adding boiling water and skimming the oil off the top. This vitamin rich grease was the most important trade commodity into the interior. Thus the traditional trade routes were known as grease trails. In times of hardship, eulachon grease provided

the necessary nutrients to stave off starvation and survive. The grease is as much a medicine as it is a food source.

Salmon from the Fraser River dried by the unique combination of heat and wind found in Lillooet was the “gold standard” for the St’át’imc at Sekw’el’was. Eulachon grease served as the currency for many Pacific Coast First Nations within a sophisticated network of trade between nations. Each nation had certain natural assets that came in abundance for trade within the eulachon economy, yet without jeopardizing the ecological balance that is central to indigenous worldviews.

Colonial impact has been devastating for First Nations’ land-based self-sufficiency economies. The indigenous system of economic exchange was centred on living in balance and harmony with what the land, lakes, rivers and ocean provides. As University of Victoria Indigenous scholar Taiaiake Alfred outlines in a recent paper “Colonialism and State Dependency” the “Disconnection from the spiritual, cultural and physical heritage of our Indigenous homelands is the real reason for the cultural and physical disempowerment of First Nations as collectivities and as individuals.”

The industrial economy brought with it dramatic impacts on eulachon runs. With annual runs that once involved 13 West Coast rivers, eulachon came in abundance. Yet in the 1990’s, licenses were issued to shrimp trawler fisheries to catch at the mouths of eulachon rivers where massive amounts of eulachon were taken as by-catch and thrown back dead. Industrial logging practices were simultaneously clogging spawning rivers. These factors and others have decimated the eulachon runs that once provided a central food source and the highly-valued grease that gave traditional indigenous trade routes their names.

The contemporary global economy uses the concept of growth as the primary indicator of value, typified by the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This is a system that values any form of exchange or activity, even those that are harmful to people or the environment.

A common example is that oil spills are good for the GDP, yet oil spills are profoundly destructive to the balance and harmony of natural systems as well as human health and wellbeing. This is a fundamental flaw in what is known as neo-classical economics – the type of economics that Prime Minister Stephen Harper is trained in and seemingly bases all of his decisions upon.

Genuine Progress Indicators are one alternative to the neo-classical GDP economic model, whereby environmental and social impacts are factored in rather than externalized and negated. Former Chief Economic with CIBC World Markets, Jeff Rubin states clearly in his recent book *The End Of Growth* that the growth of the global economy since the Second World War has been fueled by cheap oil, and that the era of cheap oil is over. Rubin argues that a more sustainable and local economy is emerging.

In a changing world, the sustainable practices of Indigenous Canadians – the eulachon economy – provides a metaphor, if not a literal template, for re-imagining the Canadian economy.

In Chief Michelle Edwards' community, the Split Rock Sekw'el'was Native Plant Nursery emulates this emerging integration of traditional cultural knowledge and the modern economy. Within the nursery, children are learning about the cultural uses of plants from their traditional territory, and connecting with the land in a culturally authentic way. And the community is most certainly actively managing their "gold" – the salmon – in a sustainable way.

A template for a sustainable economy.

Lee White is a Senior Advisor with GMG Consulting (Good Medicine Group), which works with Aboriginal communities and organizations, as well as government and resource-based industries, to support Aboriginal self-determination.

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Residential school commission received nutritional experiment documents in 2010

[APTN National News](#)

July 23, 2013

Jorge Barrera

The commission created to delve into the dark history of residential schools has been in possession of documents related to nutritional experiments conducted on First Nations people for at least three years, according to Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt's office.

Valcourt's office said most of the 900 documents were turned over to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in 2010 and the rest in 2011. The documents are all related to nutritional experiments conducted on First Nations people and children in residential schools between 1942 and 1952.

"These are abhorrent examples of the dark pagers of the residential schools' legacy," said Andrea Richer, in an email to *APTN National News*.

A spokesperson for the TRC confirmed the commission is in possession of the documents. The spokesperson said TRC Commissioner Justice Murray Sinclair

believes the commission's researchers need to take a thorough look at the documents before issuing any comment.

The nutritional experimentation issue will be addressed in the TRC's final report, the spokesperson said. The TRC's mandate ends next year.

The subject of nutritional experiments exploded last week after the *Canadian Press* reported on a study by University of Guelph food historian Ian Mosby. Mosby's study was titled Administering Colonial Science: Nutrition Research and Human Biomedical Experimentation in Aboriginal Communities and Residential schools, 1942-1952.

The study found that the experiments were conducted in communities and six residential schools in northern Ontario, northern Manitoba, British Columbia, Alberta and Nova Scotia. The targeted communities included Norway House, Cross Lake and God's Lake Mine in Manitoba, along with residential schools in Port Alberni, B.C., Lethbridge, Alta., Kenora, Ont., and Shubenacadie, N.S.

The Assembly of First Nations, which was gathered in Whitehorse, Yukon, for an annual general meeting at the time, immediately reacted after the story surfaced and passed an emergency resolution calling on Ottawa to apologize for the biomedical experiments.

Grassroots activists also responded by calling for national moment of silence on Thursday to "reflect upon the impacts of Canada's residential schools," according to a press statement. The remembrance event, with planned gatherings in Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Ont., Sudbury, Ont., Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Edmonton and Vancouver, will also call on Ottawa to "honour its 2008 apology" to residential school survivors and release all documents requested by the TRC.

[The TRC and Ottawa have been battling over the release residential school documents.](#)

Valcourt has said that Prime Minister Stephen Harper's 2008 apology covered the nutritional experiments.

Quebec chief wants better Algonquin representation: Gilbert Whiteduck says Assembly of First Nations lacks widespread representation

[CBC News](#)

Jul 23, 2013 7:21 AM ET



Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo speaks with media as Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg First Nation Chief Gilbert Whiteduck (left) and nation AFN youth representative Kluane Adamek look on. (Adrian Wyld/The Canadian Press)

A Quebec Algonquin chief has joined other First Nation leaders in campaigning to form a new alliance, saying he's not satisfied with work being done by the Assembly of First Nations.

Gilbert Whiteduck, chief of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg band near Maniwaki, Que., said he has sent letters to the 11 Algonquin communities in Ontario and Quebec asking them to a meeting in September.

"There's been division in the nation for some time and our young people have been telling us that we as leadership need to show that indeed we can come together," he said.

He said he's hoping to find ways to better protect Algonquin land, wanting more say over development, along with language.

"We need to be equals at the table, we can no longer be relegated to the back of the bus, just kind of sending in our comments and offering our suggestions," he said.

"Governments only want to consult, they're never willing to accommodate. We're saying we need to be accommodated."

More 'forceful action' needed

The push comes a week after the AFN annual meeting in Whitehorse, Yukon was challenged by a meeting held by a separate group of chiefs in Saskatchewan.

Whiteduck, who didn't go to Whitehorse, said he's unhappy with the way the AFN is representing the interests of Algonquins.

"It's my belief that the AFN unfortunately has been spinning their wheels and not taking the kind of forceful action we believe needs to be taken," he said in an interview with host Alan Neal on CBC Radio's *All in a Day*.

"It doesn't mean we can't work with AFN but we don't necessarily believe (they're) the body that's going to move forward very fundamental issues."

Whiteduck later said "forceful action" involves being more direct and willing to upset the government.

Courts could get involved

Also factoring in is the fact the assembly is an advocacy group, he said, not a treaty holder.

"We can have a body like the AFN helping us open doors, but once the door is open they need to step aside," he said.

Whiteduck said if the government doesn't recognize a new group and chooses to continue working through the AFN, they could challenge that decision in the courts or "on the ground."

He said he hasn't received any feedback from the other communities as the letters were only mailed last week.

Consultation period back on yet again; City, Snuneymuxw talking once more

[Nanaimo Daily News](#)

July 23, 2013

Spencer Anderson

Talks have resumed between the City of Nanaimo and Snuneymuxw First Nations over the Colliery dams issue, following a meeting between councils for the two parties Monday morning.

The Daily News has also learned that officials from both parties are set to meet with representative from the B.C. Dam Safety Section today at 10:30 a.m. at SFN

headquarters to discuss the next steps for dealing with the middle and lower Colliery dams, which have been designated as a serious liability in the event that they fail.

The announcement came just days after Snuneymuxw Chief Doug White announced he was withdrawing from the talks over "serious concerns" he had that there was no chance of "real engagement" between the two groups.

White said last week that it was apparent that city staffers had displayed an unwillingness to revisit and reassess options to address safety concerns with the 100-year-old structures.

"The city staff and council made it clear over the past number of days that there's nobody to talk to, nobody listening," White said last week.

But by Monday afternoon, the tone had changed considerably.

"I appreciate the open and constructive dialogue this morning between our Councils, and to carrying on with the 30 day process laid out in the City Council resolution of July 8," White said in a press statement. "This matter remains complicated and not easy for any of us. But I appreciated the leadership shown by everyone this morning, and look forward to next steps."

Mayor John Ruttan had previously stated the door was open for talks to resume, and said he was pleased talks are moving forward again.

He stressed that no decision has been reached between the two parties.

It is not clear exactly what has changed from last week. Ruttan said both organizations have questions about the issue that need to be addressed.

"What we did do was just have a very extensive discussion about moving forward and about how the interests of the city and SFN can be met together and that's what we're doing," he said.

White could not be reached for comment before deadline.

City council originally voted on Oct. 22 to remove the structures and renaturalize the stream and immediate area.

However, council authorized two engineering reports outlining alternative measures to address safety concerns following intense public pressure from residents.

On May 13, council voted 5-4 to remove the dams this summer and begin building replacements the following summer. Not long after, White approached the city and

requested a 30-day consultation period to discuss Snuneymuxw concerns, which was granted.

SAnderson@nanaimodailynews.com 250-729-4255 " We want to hear from you.

Send comments on this story to letters@nanaimodailynews.com. Letters must include daytime phone number and hometown.

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Maniwaki chief says AFN lacks Algonquin representation

[Ottawa Citizen](#)

July 23, 2013



Chief Gilbert Whiteduck, of Maniwaki's Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg band, says the Assembly of First Nations has been 'spinning their wheels' and has contacted other Algonquin band leaders, calling for a September meeting. Photograph by: Chris Mikula, The Ottawa Citizen

The chief of the Algonquin band near Maniwaki says he's not happy with the work done by the Assembly of First Nations, and has joined other leaders in a campaign for a new aboriginal alliance.

Gilbert Whiteduck, chief of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg band, said the AFN lacks adequate Algonquin representation. He told CBC he has sent letters to the 11 Algonquin communities in Quebec and Ontario, calling for a September meeting.

"It's my belief that the AFN unfortunately has been spinning their wheels and not taking the kind of forceful action we believe needs to be taken," he told CBC.

"We need to be equals at the table, we can no longer be relegated to the back of the bus, just kind of sending in our comments and offering our suggestions."

The chief said "forceful action" involves a willingness to upset the government.

Whiteduck's call for a meeting of Algonquin chiefs comes a week after the AFN's annual meeting in Whitehorse, Yukon. That meeting was challenged by a group of chiefs in Saskatchewan.

Whiteduck said he hasn't yet heard back from the other Algonquin chiefs.

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Signs appear of improving relations between Hobbema and Wetaskiwin: Building bridges to reconciliation: Relationship improves on eve of TRC meetings

[Edmonton Journal](#)

July 23, 2013

Brent Wittmeier



Lorne Green is a health support worker who has reached out to neighbouring communities to explain the effects of residential schools. He stands near new welcome signs to Wetaskiwin which also includes the Cree language. Photograph by: Shaughn Butts, Edmonton Journal

EDMONTON - People in Wetaskiwin still talk about the boycott of 1982.

Tired of predatory, two-tiered pricing, leaders from Hobbema's four nations gathered to declare commercial warfare that Christmas on the town 17 kilometres to the north.

Used car dealers had been caught quoting prices \$800 to \$1,300 higher for aboriginal customers. A hairdresser charged a Hobbema woman nearly double for a perm. Clerks in one shop accused a nine-year-old girl of shoplifting, then allegedly made her pull down her pants to prove otherwise. And lawsuits bounced back and forth between a Wetaskiwin grocer and a Samson Cree First Nation band member.

"They're saying they don't need us and don't want us, so we'll carry on our own way," said Victor Buffalo, the then-chief of the Samson Cree.

So on Dec. 1, 1982, 4,300 four nations residents collectively took their business — and freshly minted oil royalty cheques — back to Hobbema, to Ponoka, to anywhere except Wetaskiwin.

Mayor Bill Elliot needs no such drastic measure to prove Wetaskiwin needs their 15,000 neighbours down the road. The relationship with his small city of 12,500 goes beyond simple economics. He hopes to nudge it toward positive collaboration between neighbours that need each other.

“We have a state of the art hospital here, and I don’t know if we would have it because of our population,” Elliot says. “When I retired (from teaching), 30 per cent of the kids in our school were First Nations kids.”

Later this week, Elliot will be among many Wetaskiwin residents in Hobbema to attend Truth and Reconciliation Commission meetings at the Ermineskin Junior Senior High School. A former principal himself, Elliot has been around long enough to remember the month-long fallout of the boycott, including the city’s two-page apology printed in the local paper. In the ensuing years, he has kept an eye on the often fractious relationship between an aboriginal community named after a Dutch painter and a settler city named after the Cree words which mean the hills where peace was made. After 21 years on council, Elliot ran for mayor in 2010 on a platform of improving that connection.

Some changes under Elliot’s tenure have been noticeable. Cree syllabics now adorn the back of many city business cards. Bilingual welcome signs greet band members entering the city’s south and west fringes. Other changes are less obvious, like the six-council committee featuring elected officials from each of the four bands — Samson, Ermineskin, Louis Bull, Montana — along with Wetaskiwin’s county and city representatives.

In October, the committee negotiated a new mutual aid agreement. This spring, firefighters from Wetaskiwin stood side by side with their Hobbema colleagues for the first time to fight stubborn grass fires. There’s also increasing cross-pollination at the various council meetings, with invitations extended to attend each others’ budget presentations, planning sessions and cultural events.

In the past few months, both communities have also shown a greater willingness to confront an ugly past. The Truth and Reconciliation meetings — mandated under the 2007 residential school settlement with the federal government — will arrive on Wednesday and Thursday. Sessions are open to anyone wishing to hear those affected talk about one of Canada’s most misguided chapters. In the old gym, the sole remaining structure from the residential school once on the site, there will be displays, including local photos supplied by the Wetaskiwin Archives.

There's also been engagement of that legacy on the grassroots level. In mid-May, more than 400 students and area residents packed a Wetaskiwin hotel for a workshop aimed at explaining the legacy of the residential schools.

Attendees heard what social workers at the four nations of Maskwacis — the collective name for the four bands — have been saying for years: problems that push Hobbema into the media spotlight are symptoms of a collective post-traumatic stress disorder. Unable to envision a future, confrontation or self-destructive behaviours can become ways of asserting control. It takes generations to change things, says Lorne Green, a 50-year-old Samson Cree health support worker whose job is to provide emotional assistance to residential school survivors.

"The problems still exist in our communities, the downstream effects of the residential schools," Green says. "I thought if only Wetaskiwin and Ponoka understood where these things come from, maybe they would change their perceptions."

Building Bridges to Reconciliation is Green's brainchild. Frustrated with media coverage of Hobbema, Green hoped to help connect the dots between residential schools and addictions and gang violence. A committee was struck from Hobbema and Wetaskiwin, bringing together residents, school officials local pastors and politicians like Elliot. The May 16 workshop was only the first part of a long-term conversation, Green said.

Having attended Hobbema's residential school himself from 1968 until its final days in 1975, Green knows how near the surface those effects still linger. But he's hopeful community members can foster enough mutual respect and understanding to live and work together.

"Awareness is being created, not only among non-First Nations, but First Nations ourselves," Green says. "We're becoming aware of how the schools affected us. And now that awareness is created, our recovery begins. It's an exciting time in our history."

The Prairies are dotted with communities like Wetaskiwin, former agricultural centres near growing reserve communities that rely on their services. Hobbema wasn't the last aboriginal community to bridle under the arrangement. In 2005, Saddle Lake band council boycotted nearby St. Paul, two hours northeast of Edmonton, after a councillor there wrote an editorial singling out "the native population" for persistent crime in town.

Alberta's settler and aboriginal populations have often fallen into "deeply rutted patterns," says Roger Epp, a political scientist at the University of Alberta. After decades teaching at the U of A's Augustana campus in Camrose, including difficult

classes on aboriginal politics occasionally hosted in Hobbema, Epp wrote an essay entitled *We Are All Treaty People*.

"What I think is really positive and interesting is this attempt to rethink that relationship," Epp says. "If you can't pick up the phone and ask someone, 'just help me understand what's going on here,' because there's no relationship, then those things tear at the fabric."

Reconciliation too often comes from a settler political framework, Epp argues, a tendency to dismiss history as too heavy a burden. It isn't about what Canada's aboriginal community wants — the so-called Indian problem — but the settler problem, or what Epp calls "the whole bundle of attitudes that say there was nothing here when we came." Government apologies can only go so far.

"The conversation about reconciliation really has to happen at a face-to-face, community-to-community level," says Epp, an honorary witness at the commission hearings.

"It's one thing to favour reconciliation, to favour strong assertions of aboriginal self-governance if you're living in downtown Toronto. It's another thing to come to that conclusion in an active, reciprocal way in Wetaskiwin."

For Elliot, it all begins with putting yourself out there. Outside the Building Bridges workshop in May, an older Hobbema woman sidled up to him to talk about the day she spotted the Cree welcome sign while driving into town. She had forced her husband to pull over to look more closely.

"You don't know what this means to us," she told him. The days of boycotts are over, along with so many other things.

"I hope it's changing, I don't think I'm totally deluded it's going to be changed overnight," Elliot says. "But you slowly chip away, right? The best way to eat an elephant is one bite at a time, so that's what we're working on."

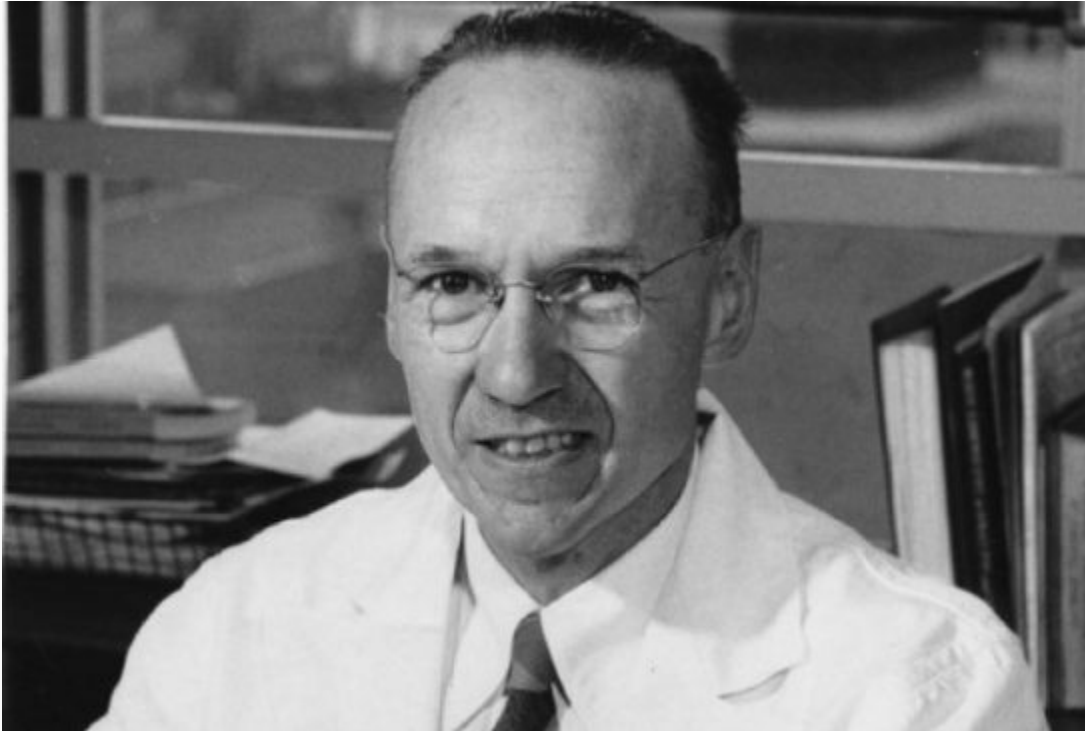
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Son defends scientist behind aboriginal nutrition experiments:
Son of Lionel Pett, who carried out nutrition experiments on
aboriginal children in the 1940s, doubts they were starved

[Toronto Star](#)

July 24, 2013

Andrew Livingstone



Department of National Health and Welfare Dr Lionel Bradley Pett was one of the lead scientists on the nutritional experiments the Canadian government authorized on aboriginal children in residential schools across Canada in the 1940s and 50s.

The son of the lead scientist who [carried out nutritional experiments on aboriginal children](#) in the 1940s and '50s has defended his father's actions, saying he doesn't believe aboriginal children were starved in the name of science.

"He was just trying to do good work," Hugh Pett said of his late father, Dr. Lionel B. Pett, who supervised the research for the precursor to Health Canada.

Hugh Pett said his father's efforts were aimed at keeping Canadians healthy at home and abroad on limited food supplies during the war.

He also criticized Shawn Atleo, national chief of the Assembly of First Nations, for saying the experiments, carried out on 1,300 native children and adults, contributed to malnourishment among children at the controversial residential schools.

"That (allegation) to me sounds totally bizarre," Pett said Tuesday from his home in Kelowna, B.C.

"That doesn't make sense in any age and any context. He's upset and saying things he didn't really know what actually happened."

Pett also wants the government to release the paperwork on the experiments so that the public can better understand what his father, who died in 2003, was doing.

Details of the experiments became known following [recently published research](#) by University of Guelph food historian Ian Mosby, who discovered that federal scientists used hungry and malnourished aboriginals to study the effects of nutritional supplements.

The experiments, Mosby found, went on for a decade. Milk rations were halved in some instances. In other cases, hundreds were deprived of essential vitamins and minerals. Dental services were also denied because they affected the accuracy of the results in the experiments.

While the experiments have revealed another dark chapter in Canada's treatment of aboriginal people in the last century, they've also put the spotlight on a man who was considered a leader in his field at the time.

Born in Winnipeg in 1909, Lionel Pett was always interested in science. His father and grandfather had both been bakers, and his plan was to become a cereal chemist.

However, after attending the Ontario Agricultural College, he became interested in soil chemistry and how it related to crop production.

Pett received a master's and a PhD from the University of Toronto before moving west to teach biochemistry at the University of Alberta in 1936. By 1941, the 32-year-old Pett was named director of nutritional services for the Department of Pensions and National Health.

At the height of the Second World War, he was assigned to study how vitamins and minerals affected human productivity: what foods would go a long way to keeping Canadians healthy.

In a 1942 interview, Pett said he struggled for years to develop a plan to ensure that "everyone here in Canada (has) enough to eat." He even advocated for a national lunchroom program to make sure children were fed properly.

"There is no better place to make a contribution to the health of a nation than in the schools," he said in 1944, a year after representing Canada at an international food conference. It was there that Pett helped pen a recommendation that countries should develop a national food authority and expand agriculture to deal with potential malnutrition postwar.

Under Pett's guidance, Canada became the first country in the world to gather statistics on height and weight based on a survey carried out in 1953. This data was used to create guidelines on optimal health for doctors and Canadians.

At its annual general meeting last week in Whitehorse, the Assembly of First Nations ' chiefs called on the government to provide complete access to all records regarding experiments carried out on residential school students.

The federal government has called the experiments “abhorrent” and has launched an investigation.

Aboriginal leaders to press premiers on poverty, education:
Groups also want to discuss violence against aboriginal women,
housing issues

[CBC News](#)

Jul 24, 2013 5:18 AM ET

Susana Mas



Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne will host provincial leaders from across the country for the Council of the Federation meeting at Niagara-on-the-Lake. (Sean Kilpatrick/Canadian Press)

Canada's provincial and territorial premiers will meet with aboriginal leaders on Wednesday afternoon as Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne kicks off the annual

summer gathering in Niagara-on-the-Lake.

A number of issues facing Canada's Aboriginal Peoples – including poverty, a lack of affordable housing, education and ending violence against aboriginal women – are expected to be on the agenda during Wednesday's meeting of the premiers with First Nations, Inuit and Métis leaders.

Wynne replaces Nova Scotia Premier Darrell Dexter as Chair of the Council of the Federation, the group that makes up Canada's 13 provincial and territorial premiers.

A news conference is scheduled for Wednesday at 3 p.m. ET.

While the challenges facing Canada's aboriginals are numerous, this semi-annual meeting of the premiers comes on the heels of revelations that the Canadian government used at least 1,300 aboriginal children attending residential schools in British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Nova Scotia as test subjects.

On the agenda at the Premiers meeting

Wednesday: Premiers meet with five groups of aboriginal leaders which includes the Assembly of First Nations, the Métis National Council, the Native Women's Association of Canada, the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples, and Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.

Thursday: Premiers will focus on the economy and will discuss jobs, skills and training, strategic infrastructure and fiscal arrangements. Premiers will also discuss progress on the Canadian Energy Strategy.

Friday: Premiers will discuss affordable and social housing, bullying and cyberbullying. Premiers will also discuss progress on health-care innovation.

A closing news conference is planned for Friday afternoon.

For continuing coverage of the meeting in Niagara-on-the-Lake, stay with CBCNews.ca.

The research recently published by historian Ian Mosby revealed that the Canadian government conducted nutritional experiments on malnourished aboriginal children and adults during and after the Second World War.

Shawn Atleo, the national chief for the Assembly of First Nations, has demanded an apology from the federal government and is pointing to this and other examples of past abuses as evidence that the federal government should let their communities exercise control over education.

Last week, [the AFN unanimously passed a motion](#) opposing the federal government's draft legislation or "blueprint" for First Nations education, citing several key problems with it.

The AFN will make a presentation to the premiers highlighting a number of priorities where action is needed such as education, economic development, ending violence against indigenous women and girls, housing, a national disaster mitigation strategy, and health.

Affordable housing

The Congress of Aboriginal Peoples will be pressing for better living conditions for aboriginals living off-reserve.

"How can you go and get an education if you don't have a safe, warm place to lay your head at night? How can you get training if you don't have an address? You

can't," said Betty Ann Lavallée, the national chief of the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples in an interview with CBC News.

A great deal of Canada's aboriginal youth find themselves "couchsurfing."

"They can't get into training institutions because they don't have permanent addresses ... some of them don't feel safe in shelters, some of them are on the street. They want to get off the street, they want to get out of gangs. They just need that safe, affordable place to lay their head at night," Lavallée said.

Housing will also be the top priority for the group representing Canada's Inuit.

Overcrowded, substandard housing contributes to many serious health problems in the North such as outbreaks of tuberculosis, a spokesperson for Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami told CBC News.

Group pushes for inquiry into murdered or missing women

The priority for the Native Women's Association of Canada is to fight poverty.

Michèle Audette, the president of the Native Women's Association of Canada, told CBC News she will also call on the premiers and territorial leaders to support the group's push for a national public inquiry into why so many aboriginal women are murdered or go missing.

"It is not a native women's issue, or an aboriginal issue. For us, it's a Canadian issue and everybody is affected by that," Audette said.

The Native Women's Association of Canada has said they have documented over 600 cases where aboriginal women have been murdered or gone missing between 2005 and 2010 — a number the RCMP has told CBC News it can't confirm.

[A report made public by the Office of the Correctional Investigator in March](#) found evidence of "systemic discrimination" against Canada's Aboriginal Peoples.

Aboriginals are so vastly overrepresented in Canada's federal prison system that current policies are clearly failing them, said Howard Sapers, the correctional investigator for Canada.

Aboriginal women are not only over-represented in the federal prison system, they are also serving more time.

[Another federal report published last September](#) revealed that the number of aboriginal women in the federal prison system amount to "nothing short of a crisis."

The Métis National Council will also be present during Wednesday's meeting of the premiers.

The premiers will meet on Thursday to discuss skills and training, infrastructure and a Canadian energy strategy.

On Friday, [the premiers will talk about bullying and cyberbullying](#), as well as progress on health-care innovation.

A closing news conference is planned for Friday afternoon.

First Nations leaders tell inquiry Manitoba girl's death due to 'colonialism'

[Vancouver Sun](#)

July 24, 2013

Chinta Puxley

WINNIPEG - Manitoba aboriginal leaders say the death of a five-year-old girl at the hands of her guardians was the result of centuries of colonialism in Canada.

Jay Funke, lawyer representing the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs and the Southern Chiefs Organization, told an inquiry looking into the death of Phoenix Sinclair that the child-welfare practice of seizing native children is seen by many aboriginals as an extension of the residential school system.

"First Nation leaders maintain that these separation practices have also contributed to the grim socio-economic reality confronting many First Nation families and children throughout Manitoba," Funke told Commissioner Ted Hughes during closing submissions Wednesday.

"This reality includes deep and protracted poverty, disproportionate rates of incarceration and criminal lifestyles, substance abuse, mental health challenges, infant and early mortality and — all too frequently — tragic deaths."

First Nations make up just under 15 per cent of the Manitoba population, but 85 per cent of the 9,700 children in care are aboriginal.

The impact of colonial practices continues to be felt by native people and helps explain the disproportionate number of aboriginal children in care, Funke said.

"First Nation leaders believe that the tragedy suffered by Phoenix was, in large part, the result of centuries of colonial-based policies and practices which have been forced upon the First Nations people of Canada," he said.

Phoenix spent much of her short life bouncing in and out of care, but was always returned to her mother, despite allegations of abuse.

The girl died in 2005 on the cold basement floor of her family's home on the Fisher River reserve after withstanding repeated tortuous abuse which broke virtually every bone in her body.

She was buried in a shallow grave near the community's garbage dump while her mother, Samantha Kematch, continued to collect child subsidy cheques.

Kematch and her boyfriend, Karl McKay, were convicted of first-degree murder.

Hughes is examining how Phoenix slipped through the cracks of Manitoba child welfare and why her murder went undiscovered for months.

After hearing testimony from 126 witnesses, Hughes is hearing closing submissions this week. His report is expected by mid-December.

The province and some child-welfare authorities say the system has greatly improved since Phoenix's death, but Funke said the inquiry must also address the disproportionate number of aboriginal children in care.

Children are most often apprehended because of neglect. Funke said there is no clear definition of what constitutes neglect. Systemic poverty and lack of adequate housing may be beyond the control of parents and shouldn't necessarily be cause for children to be removed from the home, he said.

Apprehending children is expensive and can do more harm to the child, Funke said.

"First Nation leaders are concerned about the fragmentation of traditional family units and the loss of community practices that traditionally saw First Nations flourish and live a good and healthy life."

The way child welfare is funded needs to be examined as well to see if there is a "built-in incentive" to remove children from their home, Funke added.

Often, he said, funding is only available after a child is apprehended instead of supporting the family while the child remains in the home.

First Nations leaders want to see that the inquiry and the recommendations arising from it have honoured the life of Phoenix and contributed to improvements, the lawyer concluded.

"The First Nations leaders of this province are committed to ensuring that Phoenix did not die in vain."

First Nations stories earn CBC reporter the Debwewin Citation: Thunder Bay's Jody Porter to receive award from Anishinabek Nation's 7th Generation Charity

[CBC News](#)

Jul 25, 2013 12:40 PM ET

A reporter at CBC in Thunder Bay has won an award for journalism excellence.



CBC Thunder Bay's Jody Porter. (Supplied)

The Anishinabek Nation, also known as the Union of Ontario Indians, is recognizing Jody Porter with the Debwewin Citation for excellence in reporting on First Nations issues.

It is described as the only award of its kind in Canada.

One of the criteria is that recipients must demonstrate an ongoing and sustained body of relevant work.

A news release from the Anishinabek Nation cites Porter's achievements, including CBC's Common Ground Cafe project in Thunder Bay, which brought strangers together to discuss race relations in the city.

"Jody's understanding and dedication to covering First Nations issues in the region is reflected in her reporting and has garnered many other awards, including ... a national RTNDA award for her documentary on Little Charlie," said CBC Thunder Bay station manager Susan Rogers.

"In between those big projects and stories, Jody has built bridges with First Nations communities, not only highlighting their troubles but also celebrating the successes."

Porter will receive the award next month in Sudbury at the 7th Generation Charity's annual Evening of Excellence Awards.

Top 5 issues expected to dominate agenda of premiers' meeting

[CTV News](#)

July 24, 2013 12:51PM EDT

Marlene Leung



Prince Edward Island Premier Robert Ghiz, Nova Scotia Premier Darrell Dexter, Newfoundland and Labrador Premier Kathy Dunderdale and New Brunswick Premier David Alward, left to right, chat as the Atlantic premiers meet in this April 2013 file photo. (Andrew Vaughan/THE CANADIAN PRESS)

First Nations issues, energy delivery, and infrastructure and health-care funding are a few of the issues expected to dominate the discussions as Canada's premiers gather for their semi-annual summit.

The Council of the Federation gathering -- where Canada's premiers discuss critical issues facing provincial and territorial governments -- starts Wednesday in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont., and ends with a closing news conference on Friday.

Here's a look at some of the issues that will be discussed during this year's summer meeting:

First Nations

First Nations leaders are set to meet with the premiers on Wednesday to help kick off the summit.

First Nations leaders will discuss ongoing issues affecting First Nations communities that they feel need to be brought to the attention of provincial and territorial leaders, and are expected to focus on aboriginal education.

Infrastructure

After flooding this year in Alberta, Manitoba and Toronto, coupled with the Lac-Mégantic train disaster, there's no doubt that infrastructure will be a central topic.

Ottawa has a fund in place to help respond to disasters, but some premiers say they need sustainable infrastructure funding, not disaster relief.

"We actually have to put in place infrastructure and mitigation which should be funded by the federal government -- as it has been up until now on an ad hoc basis -- to make sure we're preventing these disasters where possible," Alberta Premier Alison Redford told The Canadian Press.

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne has previously indicated that she'll be pushing for sustainable funding from Ottawa for infrastructure projects and improvements.

"It's about ports, it's about roads, it's about bridges," said Wynne, who is chairing the meeting. "There's infrastructure across the country that we need to make sure is in good shape and that we need to enhance, given the current realities."

Health care

Health care will be a major issue, as this is the last premiers' meeting before the 2014 expiration of the Health Accord -- the legislation that sets the terms for health-care funding between the federal and provincial government.

The Ontario Health Coalition and the Canadian Union of Public Employees are urging the premiers to push the federal government for improved and stable health-care funding.

The OHC issued a statement warning of future federal funding cuts and their effects on the public Medicare system.

CUPE President Paul Moist said in a statement that the federal government must negotiate a new 10-year Health Accord with "stable and adequate funding" and a minimum six per cent escalator.

At the meeting, the premiers are expected to discuss health-care delivery options and the efficacy of current health-care delivery guidelines.

Jobs and skills training

Planned changes to the way Ottawa funds job-training programs is also likely to come up.

The federal government plans to change the way they contribute to training programs by diverting some of money earmarked for the provinces to the Canada Job Grant instead.

Under the new funding terms -- which are set to be negotiated this summer and in the fall -- the provinces and employers are each responsible to contribute one-third.

Wynne wants to negotiate the terms, but other premiers have said they'd prefer to opt out with full compensation instead.

Energy

The premiers are expected to discuss a national energy strategy to help make energy delivery across the country more sustainable and efficient.

The \$7.7-billion Muskrat Falls hydro project, as well as safe energy transportation and transmission, are also expected come up.

With files from CP24's Katie Simpson and The Canadian Press

11 projects funded to prevent violence in aboriginal communities

[Telegram](#)

July 25, 2013



Charlene Johnson. — Telegram file photo

The provincial government has announced 11 recipients of the Aboriginal Women's Violence Prevention Grant Program.

Charlene Johnson, minister responsible for the Status of Women and lead minister of the Violence Prevention Initiative, unveiled 11 new projects in

Happy Valley-Goose Bay that will share in the \$200,000 in available funds.

"We remain committed to working with our Aboriginal communities to prevent violence and I am so pleased to see the continued interest in this program," said Johnson. "The innovative ideas and culturally-relevant proposals we received this year demonstrate how this collaborative approach is helping us all to take

responsibility in addressing violence. Our government is pleased to make \$200,000 available for this program and I am eager to see how the outcomes will help Aboriginal women and children recognize violence and take measures to eradicate it from our communities."

"Increased community awareness and education is key to helping prevent violence in our community as a whole," said Felix Collins, minister for intergovernmental and Aboriginal affairs.

"Violence against women and children cannot and will not be tolerated in today's society. Our government remains committed to working with Aboriginal organizations to advance the quality of life for Aboriginal women and children throughout our province," Collins said.

Funding for the Aboriginal Women's Violence Prevention Grants Program is made available through the Women's Policy Office, the lead department of the provincial government's violence prevention initiative. Since 2005, 90 projects have been funded through this program.

The projects approved and amounts of funding are:

- St. John's Native Friendship Centre, Empowering Women, Embracing Culture, Strengthening Communities, grant awarded \$30,000;
- NunatuKavut Community Council Inc., NunatuKavut Elder & Youth Gathering, grant awarded \$25,512;
- Flat Bay Indian Band Inc., Captive Expressions - Violence Prevention Indigenous Film Series, grant awarded \$25,000;
- Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation, Innu Ishkueut Healing Journey – Conference, grant awarded \$10,000;
- Sheshatshiu Innu First Nation, Innu Ishkueut Healing Journey – Retreat, grant awarded \$15,000;
- Nunatsiavut Government, Annanut Kativisak Women's Retreat, grant awarded \$8,336;
- Nunatsiavut Government, Self Defense Workshops, grant awarded \$10,640;
- AnanauKatiget Tumingit Regional Inuit Women's Association Inc., Phase 2 Community Wellness Workshops, grant awarded \$25,512;
- Qalipu Mi'kmaq First Nation, Enabling Qalipu Women, grant awarded \$15,000;

- Mushuau Innu First Nation, Natuashish Women's Shelter Violence Prevention Enhancement Project, grant awarded \$30,000;
- Newfoundland Aboriginal Women's Network, Following in our Grandmothers Footprints; Realizing our Leadership Potential Phase 2, grant awarded \$5,000

Indian status and citizenship both out of reach for desperate Ontario mom

[Edmonton Journal](#)

July 25, 2013

Tobi Cohen



Heather Harnois' Canadian Ojibwa ancestry dates back generations but the federal government will not recognize the 25-year-old as a status Indian. Canada also won't recognize the Ontario mom, who grew up in Canada as a teen and is desperate to raise her two children here, as a Canadian citizen as she was the second generation of offspring born abroad in the United States. Photograph by: Tobi Cohen/Postmedia News, Postmedia News

OTTAWA — Despite a Canadian Ojibwa bloodline spanning so many years ago that her grandmother can't put a date on it, Heather Harnois is considered neither aboriginal, nor Canadian.

It means that while she grew up in this country since her teens, the now 25-year-old mother of two can't get a social insurance number, health-care coverage or child tax benefits even though one of her children was born in Canada.

She says sexist laws have prevented her from obtaining her status Indian card, which would give her all those rights and privileges, and Citizenship and Immigration has suggested her only means of naturalization is to first apply for permanent residency on humanitarian and compassionate grounds.

"I've been living like an illegal immigrant for almost 12 years," said the frustrated Haliburton, Ont., mother during a recent trip to Ottawa to make her case to anybody who would listen. "I'm hoping to fix it. I'm not leaving."

Considered unique, Harnois' case highlights just how convoluted Canadian citizenship and aboriginal law can be.

To explain, here's a breakdown of her conundrum:

Harnois was born in the United States to an aboriginal mother and non-status father, the latter of whom she never really knew, and entered Canada legally as a dependent of a status Indian in her early teens to be closer to relatives. Her mother was also the offspring of an aboriginal mother and white father but they were never married.

While all her ancestors from her grandmother down are full-blooded aboriginals from the Chippewa of the Thames reserve near London, Ont., she argues she was ineligible for Indian status due to a "second generation cut-off" rule that prevented Indian women from passing on status. Bill C-3 passed in 2010 sought to rectify parts of the law but it offered no reprieve for her as her grandmother — an Indian woman who had children with a non-status man in the context of a common-law relationship — was still barred from passing on status.

On the citizenship side, Harnois has learned that she is also among those who were penalized in 2009 when the government amended the Citizenship Act so that second-generation offspring born abroad could not be naturalized. Part of Bill C-37, the decision was made in the aftermath of the Israel-Lebanon war after some so-called dual "citizens of convenience" were criticized for taking advantage of the Canadian government and accepting an airlift out of the region only to return once tensions died down.

Bill C-37 was supposed to help "lost Canadians" like Harnois' mother who was born outside Canada, out-of-wedlock and whose birth was registered with the band office, not the Canadian government. It helped about 95 per cent of so-called lost Canadians who often discovered they weren't citizens for a variety of administrative reasons when they applied for a passport. That said, it left out the children of

would-be war brides and Canadian servicemen born out-of-wedlock prior to 1947 when Canada had no citizenship laws of its own. It also created a new class of lost Canadians — second-generation, born-abroad residents who previously had the option to apply to retain their citizenship before their 28th birthday. It's an option that might have been available to Harnois had her mother thought to register her own citizenship and her daughter's citizenship sooner.

"It's understandable that Canadians may not want second, third and fourth generation born-abroads with no connection to Canada to be citizens," Harnois conceded.

She added this is often not the case for the remaining lost Canadians, who "have beyond substantial connections and bear legitimacy in Canada."

This week, Jackie Scott — a 68-year-old B.C. woman who was denied citizenship despite coming to Canada at the age of two with her British mother and Canadian father — went to court to fight for those lost Canadians born prior to 1947, but it's unlikely her case will have any bearing on people like Harnois.

Toronto immigration lawyer and author Jacqueline Bart said it appears Harnois is indeed "caught" in a very "difficult" and "unique" situation that may only be resolved through humanitarian and compassionate considerations. That said, she believes it was a "prudent" decision on the part of government to limit citizenship to a single generation born abroad and suggests there's "a real onus on parents to make sure they regularize their children" as soon as they can, be it through sponsorship or another method.

"Otherwise somebody could basically live here for three years and their children's, children's, children's, children's children could continue being citizens even though there's really no tie to Canada," she said, adding the law is still relatively new and many are being taken by surprise by it.

"I think in the future people will be more informed and educated and will have a greater understanding of what their rights and obligations are."

As for a possible resolution under the Indian Act, Victoria, B.C.-based aboriginal lawyer Christopher Devlin argued it's unlikely. He believes it's in the government's interest to deny Indian status to aboriginals who marry and procreate with non-aboriginals. It means in 100 years, he argued, there won't be many status Indians left which means less funding for aboriginal communities and fewer treaty obligations.

"As long as the government defines what it is to be an Indian by procreation and generation and not by other measures of culture and ethnicity, then you're going to

run into these problems and there's going to be people who very much identify with their aboriginal past but are going to be cut off from legally being Indians," he said.

"They will have gotten rid of their Indian problem by defining Indians out of existence ... It's a gradual but relentless way to eliminate your responsibility for aboriginal people."

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